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SUBJECT: IRAN PRESS/NUCLEAR: NOVEMBER 16TH

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11. (SBU) SUMMARY: The following contains November 15-16 nuclear-related statements as reported in the Iranian press by:

- 1A. Expediency Council Secretary Mohsen Rezai
- 1B. Chief of Joint Armed Forces Major General Hassan Firouzabadi
- 1C. Senior Ahmadinejad advisor (and former First VP) Parviz Davudi
- 1D. Senior Ahmadinejad advisor Mojtaba Samareh Hashemi
- 1E. Kayhan editorial: "Iran won't wait forever " [for West's response on IAEA proposal]

12. (SBU) IRIG OFFICIAL COMMENTS:

1A. EXPEDIENCY COUNCIL SECRETARY MOHSEN REZAI (NOV 15 - ISNA)

In November 15 remarks that were covered extensively in the Iranian media, Rezai said that:

- As President Obama has said, Iran's sending out 75 percent of its produced [enriched] uranium would be a confidence-building measure. The question then becomes in the face of this major Iranian confidence building measure, what will the West do? In my opinion suspending sanctions is an appropriate reciprocal confidence building measure from the West. If we cannot get this concession from the West, it will be the same as before when our confidence building measures (like enrichment suspension, honest cooperation and signing the Additional Protocol) didn't engender any reciprocal measures from the West, and we will be the loser in this political deal. If sanctions aren't suspended, Iran will be the loser in any political deal.

- IRIG officials should beware not to fall into a 'Western trap,' as the West was seeking to achieve political goals under cover of the IAEA technical proposal of providing fuel to the

Tehran Research Reactor (TRR). The IAEA's current proposal of swapping 1200 of Iranian 3.5 percent enriched uranium for 116 kg of 20 percent enriched uranium conflates the issue of achieving political goals and confidence building with a technical issue of acquiring TRR fuel.

- This fuel swap idea is a 'double-edged sword' which if not handled well could injure Iran, and to avoid falling into the Western trap, Iran needs to separate the two issues. Procuring TRR fuel is purely a technical issue. At most, we should see how much fuel the TRR will need to run, and then agree to only swapping as much 5.3 enriched uranium out as necessary. For operating five days a week, TRR needs approximately 8 kg annually, i.e. if we want to procure fuel for seven years, we will need approximately 58 kg of 20 percent enriched uranium, which would require approximately 350 kg of 3.5 percent enriched Iranian uranium. As such, talk of exporting 1200 kg of Iranian uranium, or giving the fuel a year early, or storing Iranian fuel in a third country, is not relevant.

1B. CHIEF OF JOINT ARMED FORCES MAJOR GENERAL HASSAN FIROUZABADI (Nov 15 - IRGC Website 'Basirat')

The amount of 3.5 percent fuel that Iran would exchange is not enough to injure Iran's stockpile for nuclear power plants, and that Iran will not let itself be harmed by a fuel exchange. Any such exchange of Iranian fuel would not cause any pause in the continuation of enrichment.

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1C. SENIOR AHMADINEJAD ADVISOR (AND FORMER FIRST VP) PARVIZ DAVUDI (November 15 - IRNA)

- Ahmadinejad senior advisor and former First Vice-President Parviz Davudi said that if Iran reaches agreement on the IAEA TRR fuel proposal, Iran must first receive the 20 percent enriched fuel and afterwards then give its own 3.5 percent enriched fuel.

- The West's retreat on the nuclear issue in the face of Iran is quite clear, as now the West officially recognizes Iranian enrichment, whereas previously the West couldn't even countenance "even a few centrifuges turning" in Iran.

- Iran would definitely not again encounter the behavior that France showed in previous years in not giving Iran its share from Eurodif. This experience Iran had with the French showed us we could not fully trust the West, and that we had to act such that if there were arranged to do a fuel exchange, that it be done gradually and with guarantees.

1D. SENIOR ADVISOR TO PRESIDENT AHMADINEJAD, MOJTABA SAMAREH HASHEMI: (November 14 - IRNA):

[On IAEA TRR Nuclear Fuel Deal]. Any fuel deal isn't definite and hasn't been announced, and Iran was waiting to see "how truthful the West is in their speech." Iran wants to cooperate

but the West with their media propaganda has set this cooperation off course. Iran entered into the process with good intentions but they [the West] abused these good intentions, but the Iranian nation isn't one that will succumb to pressure.

[On Turkey's possible role as a third country to receive Iran's enriched fuel]: Turkey has been proposed but Turkey hasn't yet agreed or decided whether it wishes to act in this regard.

13. (SBU) OTHER ARTICLES/NEWS

1A. JALILI BRIEFS EXPEDIENCY COUNCIL: Iranian press reported that on November 14 NSC Secretary Said Jalili briefed the Iran Expediency Discernment Council (aka 'Expediency Council,' headed by Rafsanjani) on the latest situation concerning Iran's negotiations with the European countries concerning providing nuclear fuel to Iran. No further details were available.

1B. KAYHAN EDITORIAL: "IRAN WON'T WAIT FOREVER " [FOR US RESPONSE ON IAEA PROPOSAL]

The strategic thinking of the new US administration changed after June 12. Before June 12 the US realized seeking Iran's cooperation and engaging Iran in comprehensive negotiations was "unavoidable" due to Iran's regional importance. The only question was whether Iran would enter such negotiations, since Iran had no need to do so. However several months before June 12 Presidential election this strategy changed, as the USG received reports from within Iran indicating that the reformists could win the Presidential election, and as such the USG stopped efforts to start negotiations and focused instead on helping the Reformists win.

Although disappointed with the results, after the elections the US realized that domestic intervention in Iran would complement US pressure on Iran from abroad, since Iran could be weakened by

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internal dissension, whereas (only) applying force from abroad strengthened Iran. In other words, the West realized that external pressure was effective only when strengthened by tools inside Iran, and that it now had such domestic tools. As such, it sought to intensify Iran's domestic crisis, hoping it would lead to a change in Iran's foreign policy behavior.

According to the West's mistaken analysis, the 'Vienna nuclear negotiations' are one such tool to intensify domestic Iranian conflict, as it presents Iran with equally unpalatable options.

With this IAEA proposal Iran is faced with two unpalatable options of suspending enrichment [sic] or giving up its store of enriched uranium. If it does either the West can claim victory and if it does neither it will face increased domestic pressure, since Iran lacks sufficient domestic consensus for resistance. However the West has erred in assuming that Iran lacks this domestic consensus.

Actually, the internal divisions are within the Western camp and not within Iran. It has been one month since Iran has given its answer to the Vienna draft proposal and is awaiting a Western response. The West knows that Iran has not rejected the

principle of the Vienna deal, which is buying fuel, and is only trying to address some concerns that while procuring TRR fuel, its strategic store of nuclear material be preserved. The West has not been able to decide how to address these concerns, and hence the matter remains suspended. Now the West must hear the sentence that it always uses against Iran, i.e. that Iran's patience is limited, and once Iran puts the option of domestic enrichment to the high levels needed for the TRR on the table it won't take it off.

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